

**April - June 2006 Term
Grand Jury Final Report**

Service on the Davidson County Grand Jury has been an experience that we each feel has more strongly connected us to our community and we are thankful for the opportunity. At the beginning of our term, most of us questioned the significance of the role we were to play in the judicial process, mainly due to our lack of training in criminal law. However, over the course of the term, we have come to appreciate at least two very important aspects of the Grand Jury: (1) a layman's common sense in a fair trial and (2) an avenue to bring common citizens into an active role in fighting crimes. First, we can not scrutinize the laws and determine the specifics of criminal charges, but with common sense and our own safety in mind, we can insure that irrational charges are not being subjected to our fellow peers. Secondly, through our service on the Grand Jury, we have been exposed directly to the crimes that are occurring in our community daily, as well as to the efforts that are being exercised to combat and treat these crimes. This experience has given us a new prospective which will hopefully impact our future involvement in our community in a positive manner.

THANKS & RECOGNITION

Judge Randall Wyatt – Thank you for the opportunity to serve as members of the Davidson County Grand Jury. We have been given a wonderful opportunity to serve our community, while also personally benefiting from gained insight into how our law enforcement and judicial processes function. We extend a special thanks for spending some extra time with us one-on-one, listening to and discussing some of the concerns that we encountered during our Grand Jury tenure.

Stan Fossick, Grand Jury Foreman – We have been extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve on the grand jury under the direction of an experienced and well-respected foreman. It has been an honor to work with a fellow citizen whom has such excitement and dedication toward this important civic duty. Thank you for your time, your guidance, and your generosity.

Capt. Todd Henry & Lt. Randy Hickerson, Special Investigation Division MPD – Early into our term, we received an invaluable presentation from Capt Henry and Lt Hickerson on the enormous variety of illegal drugs that exist in our community, as well as the associated paraphernalia and terminology. In addition, common prostitution, gambling, and gang practices were also presented. Although it saddens us to say so, this information proved to serve us on a daily basis as we heard indictment presentations.

Capt. Rita Baker, Domestic Violence Division, MPD – Many domestic violence cases tended to stimulate controversy due often to the lack of witnesses coupled with victims that refuse to press charges, file complaints, request restraining orders, etc. Capt. Baker provided us with a glimpse into the complicated psychology that underlies domestic violence and provided explanations of the various types of abuse that we could encounter. We especially appreciate this guidance that allowed us hear these usually emotional cases with a sympathetic ear, but importantly also with a more educated and rationale approach that hopefully always resulted in a just verdict.

Capt. Mike Hager, Lt. Glenn Hayes, Sgt. Gary Duncan, Sgt. James Johnson, Flt. Officer Andy Smeltzer, Metro Police Training Academy – We were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to visit the Metro Police Training Academy where we were able to see first hand the rigid training that cadets receive during 22 weeks of training at the Academy. In addition, we met with members of the K-9 and aviation sections that graciously explained their roles within the Police Department. Daily, we listen to the testimonies of police officers that were either the arresting officer or the officer on the scene of a crime, and it was an added benefit to see where and how they were trained.

Jim Green, TBI – Through a tour of the TBI, our group was able to gain knowledge into the foundation of this invaluable organization. We also became more aware of the time and man power dedicated to processing evidence gathered at the scene of a crime. We appreciate Jim Green and other members of the TBI staff for taking their time to answer our questions and provide a tour of the facility.

Grand Jury Process

We would like to make some suggestions for the Grand Jury process that we feel would make it a stronger and more beneficial process. We learned much during our tenure as jurors concerning how the police department and the court system works and how individuals could assist/volunteer in some of these programs. We would like to suggest that the Grand Jury be used in a way to educate the public on how they could assist. In addition, the more thorough training and education the jury members have, the more information they can share within their community concerning these opportunities.

We request that two straight chairs without armrests be placed in the Grand Jury room to accommodate the officers and other individuals who come before the body. Also, we are requesting that a paper shredder be placed in the Grand Jury room.

CONCLUSION

During our term, 864 cases were presented before the body. Of these cases, 843 were voted "A True Bill" and 21 were voted "A No True Bill".

Once again, we would like to thank Judge Wyatt for the opportunity to serve as Grand Jurors. We have learned and benefited immeasurably from the three-month tenure.

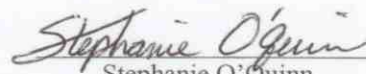

Ranae Aakre


Evelyn McCormick


Latoya Goins


George McMillion


Linda Buttry



Stephanie O'Quinn


Diana Hickerson


John Shelton


Jaha Martin


James Taylor


Brandon Martin


Amanda Vanhoose


Stan Fossick